



Sen. Dave Schmidt

2003 SESSION REPORT

44TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

APRIL, 2003

Sen. Dave Schmidt

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Committee Assignments

- Higher Education (Vice Chair)
- Education
- Economic Development
- Technology & Communications
- Rules



Dear Friends,

With only one more month left in the 2003 legislative session, I want to take a moment to update you on a few issues that I know are important to you.

Also, while the work of the people continues in Olympia, I must admit, the events of the last few days has brought a renewed perspective on the freedoms, liberties and sacrifices that define what it means to be an American.

As a member of the National Guard for the past two decades, I understand the apprehension that our soldiers and their families are going through right now. I also understand how much it means to have the prayers and support of those back home.

To show our support for the Washington National Guard members currently serving in the war against terrorism, the Washington State Senate passed Senate Resolution 8606.

The resolution recognizes "the value and dedication of a strong Washington National Guard" as they "are now serving throughout the world in critical missions supporting the nation in the war on terrorism." Two-dozen lawmakers joined with me in presenting the resolution to representatives of the Washington National Guard and signing an 8-by-3-foot banner that says, "Proud Americans Proud of You."

Again, thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you in the state Senate. It is a privilege and an honor.

A blue ink signature of Sen. Dave Schmidt, written in a cursive style.

Sen. Dave Schmidt,
44th Legislative District

SENATORS SUPPORT THE TROOPS



Sen. Dave Schmidt presents a copy of SR 8606 and a signed banner to Brig. Gen. Gordon Toney. The banner says, "Proud Americans Proud of You!"

As an active member of the National Guard for the past two decades, I could still get called up to serve in the war on terrorism. If that happens, there is a process in place (outlined in RCW 73.16.041 and the Washington State Constitution) to temporarily replace me in the Washington State Senate.

The Snohomish County Council would interview interested candidates and then make a final decision on my temporary replacement.

Charter Schools

An idea whose time has come

I voted in the Senate to pass legislation granting school districts and public universities the option to create charter schools in Washington state.

Senate Bill 5012 passed the Senate 26-23. It authorizes 70 charter schools over the next six years, but only five new schools in each of the first two years. Districts that sponsor charter schools would be eligible for federal money for charter startups as part of President Bush's No Child Left Behind education policy.

Charter schools can have a higher degree of freedom and flexibility in the classroom in exchange for a higher degree of public accountability. **This is not a mandatory directive;** this is local decisionmaking at its very best, with parents, teachers and local school board officials deciding if they want charter schools. It's about choice and competition.

PARKS FOR KIDS!

The bill for soccer moms and softball dads

The Senate passed my bill to allow cities and counties to use agriculture-designated land as recreational facilities. I sponsored this bill after meetings with the Snohomish County Council members who expressed concern about the lack of available land for Little League Activities.

Senate Bill 5661 allows cities and counties to use agricultural land for recreational activities—including soccer fields and baseball diamonds—as long as the land has not been used for agriculture purposes for the past five years. No permanent structures would be permitted on the land and the plan would have to be reviewed by local governments on an annual basis.

With more growth and more development, we're seeing less land available for soccer fields and other recreational activities for our youth. Local governments can't compete with developers when purchasing land for parks; the prices are just too high.

SB 5661 passed the Senate 31-17 and is now in the House Local Government Committee.

BUDGET CRUNCH

As many of you know, the state is in budget hole approaching \$2.6 billion. To get a jumpstart in handling this problem, Senate Republicans proposed a supplemental budget that includes several of Governor Locke's Priorities of Government. Our proposal will save \$127 million this year and another \$250 over the next biennium. Our thinking is, if these ideas are good enough for July 1 (the start of the next fiscal biennium), then they're good enough for now!

Our plan saves money by freezing enrollments to the Basic Health Plan and managing the plan more efficiently (currently, there is little enforcement to determine eligibility for the plan). We also expand the state government hiring freeze and cut travel and discretionary spending.

The overall General Fund budget for the next biennium has not yet been released by the House of Representatives or the Senate. But be assured, I will join with my Senate Republican colleagues to solve our budget woes without raising your taxes.

Transportation

The transportation crisis in our state, especially here in the Puget Sound, continues. While the solution has yet to be finalized here in the Legislature, I expect it will include provisions to allow local areas to tax themselves to solve local problems. It is also likely to contain a gas tax increase of four or five cents per gallon.

An important measure that would help us here in the 44th district is EHB 1433, which

would designate State Route 9 as a highway of statewide significance. By doing this, SR 9 will receive priority funding for improvements.

EHB 1433 passed the House of Representatives unanimously and is now in the Senate Transportation Committee. I will work with my colleagues to assure its passage.



Return Address

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If you have a moment and would like to send me your thoughts about a particular piece of legislation or comments on an issue as a whole, please feel free to include them below and mail them back to me. Just refold this update so that the "Sen. Dave Schmidt mailing address" is on the front.

It is my privilege and duty to keep my constituents informed. However, I would like to be cost-conscious as well. If you would rather receive periodic updates from me via e-mail, please check the box below and include your e-mail address.

☐ E-mail address: _____

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